VII. CENTER OPERATIONS: ADMINISTRATION

The last three chapters described the primary services of the Job Corps program at a center: vocational training, basic education, and residential living. High-quality services require effective center management and administration. In particular, centers must recruit and hire qualified staff, and they must provide a safe and secure environment in which effective learning can take place. In addition, centers must be managed to produce high-quality student outcomes and to meet (or exceed) the performance standards established by the Job Corps National Office. In this chapter, we describe center administration related to staffing and safety/security. In Chapter IX, we describe the Job Corps performance management system and how it affects center operations.

A. CENTER STAFFING

Recruiting and retaining qualified staff is critical for center operations, and the local market is likely to have great influence. In small towns and rural areas, centers often are the major employer. In these settings, recruiting skilled staff at the prevailing wage can be a problem, but staff turnover tends to be low. It may also be difficult to develop a staff mix that matches the gender and racial composition of the students. In larger labor markets, recruiting staff who have the right skills and match the student profile is easier, but turnover can present problems.

This section presents data in several areas that shed light on the tenure and turnover of center staff, discusses issues surrounding recruitment, and provides information on the characteristics of Job Corps staff.

1. Overview of Center Staffing

The organizational structure of Job Corps centers varies considerably depending on size, type (whether contract center or CCC), and the style of the operator. Typically, both vocational training and academic education are under the direct supervision of a single manager who reports to the director. In larger centers, vocational training and academic education may have separate directors who hire, train, and supervise the instructors. Residential living forms a second major division within most centers. Its director oversees residential advisors (RAs), counselors, recreation specialists, and orientation staff. In most centers, security, health services, and administrative services (personnel, finance, payroll) are separate departments, also reporting to the director. Key center staff and their roles include:

- ***Managers.*** Provide overall management on center
- ***Vocational Instructors.*** Provide the vocational testing and instruction
- ***Academic Instructors.*** Provide the academic testing and instruction
- ***Counselors.*** Facilitate students' participation in Job Corps and provide individual and group counseling services to students
- ***Residential Advisors.*** Work in the dormitories and supervise student life after training hours
- ***Recreational Staff.*** Plan recreational activities and supervise the center's recreational facilities
- ***Orientation Staff.*** Organize and implement orientation services for new students
- ***Health Care Workers.*** Provide a range of medical, dental, and mental health services
- ***Security Staff.*** Maintain internal safety and security, sometimes involving the surrounding community
- ***Placement Staff.*** Assist students in the transition from Job Corps to employment or further education and training and coordinate with placement contractors

Centers employ most of these staff directly. However, contracting is common, principally for medical services and for certain types of educational and vocational services. Physicians, dentists, and psychologists are typically retained under part-time contracts, while nurses and physician's assistants are likely to be full-time employees.

About half the centers indicate that they contract with outside educational institutions for some aspects of their academic program, typically to provide GED test services or on-center college courses. Several centers contract with a local school district that allows Job Corps students to earn credits toward their high school diploma. In one center, the entire academic program is contracted to a college. Contracted educational services are usually paid for based on an agreed-upon per-student fee.

On average, centers have approximately 130 employees, although this figure varies greatly according to the size of the center (Table VII.1). Approximately 14 percent of all center staff hold management or administrative positions, 11 percent are vocational instructors, 10 percent are academic instructors, 6 percent are counselors, and 18 percent are RAs. Overall, about 21 percent of all staff are in instructional positions, which is only slightly larger than the percentage who are RAs. Furthermore, other staff--health care, security, placement, maintenance, and food service--make up over 40 percent of all staff. The high percentage of staff in residential and other positions reflects the comprehensive nature of the Job Corps program, which delivers many other services in addition to classroom training.

There are some important differences in staffing patterns by center type. In particular, nearly 30 percent of staff in CCCs are involved in instructional activities, compared to only about 18 percent in contract centers. The difference is especially large for vocational instructors (with 17 percent of all staff in CCCs serving as vocational instructors, compared to 9 percent for contract

TABLE VII.1

DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF, BY POSITION AND CENTER TYPE
(Percentage of All Staff)

			Contract	
	Total	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Senior Management	7	10	5	6
Other Management	7	4	8	8
Vocational Instructors	11	17	9	9
Academic Instructors	10	12	9	10
Counselors	6	6	5	9
Residential Advisors	18	19	20	12
Other Staff	41	31	44	47
Approximate Average Total Number of Staff	**130**	**65**	**190**	**135**

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

centers) and for other staff (with 31 percent of CCC staff in other positions, compared to about 45 percent in contract centers). In part, this pattern is due to size differences, with the smaller CCCs having fewer specialized staff, and with some core staff covering the duties of more than one position. Not surprisingly, significantly nonresidential centers devote fewer resources to RAs.

2. Staff Experience and Turnover

Overall, a high proportion of staff have been working at centers for only a brief period (Table VII.2). About one-quarter (24 percent) of all staff have less than one year of experience on center, and another 22 percent have been at the center no more than two years. At the other extreme, 16 percent have been employed for more than 10 years.

Staff tenure varies dramatically by center type. CCCs have high percentages of staff with long tenures. For example, 26 percent of CCC staff have been employed at their current center for over 10 years, compared with only 11 percent of staff at primarily residential centers and 15 percent of staff at significantly nonresidential centers. This difference is expected, for three reasons: (1) CCCs have a longer operating history, (2) CCC operators do not change as a result of contract recompetition, and (3) most CCC staff are federal civil service employees. Staff experience and tenure also vary considerably by region (see Appendix Table B.24).[1]

A large percentage of staff with brief tenure indicates high staff turnover, and the data in Table VII.2 show substantial turnover in several positions, with that of RAs and counselors at contract centers especially high. In primarily residential contract centers, about 38 percent of staff in each position have been employed for a year or less; in significantly nonresidential centers, about

[1]Only 18 percent of the staff in contract centers in Region 9 have less than a year of experience, as compared to 40 percent or higher for staff in contract centers in Regions 1 and 5. Contract centers in Regions 4 and 9 have considerably higher proportions of long-term staff (seven years or more) than contract centers in other regions.

TABLE VII.2

DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF EXPERIENCE, BY POSITION AND CENTER TYPE
(Mean Percentage of Staff)

			Contract	
	Total	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Number of Years				
Less than 1	24	13	32	21
1 to 2	22	16	24	23
3 to 6	27	30	23	29
7 to 10	12	15	10	12
10 or more	16	26	11	15
Senior Management (Years)				
Less than 1	19	11	28	11
10 or more	26	36	19	30
Other Management (Years)				
Less than 1	16	3	24	12
10 or more	27	46	20	24
Vocational Instructor (Years)				
Less than 1	22	11	28	22
10 or more	17	29	10	18
Academic Instructor (Years)				
Less than 1	21	12	26	21
10 or more	18	24	13	19
Counselors (Years)				
Less than 1	27	12	38	24
10 or more	13	26	7	10
Residential Advisors (Years)				
Less than 1	28	13	37	25
10 or more	13	24	6	12
Other Staff (Years)				
Less than 1	26	15	34	21
10 or more	13	20	9	13

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

one-fourth of staff have been employed for a year or less. In sharp contrast to this pattern, the turnover at CCCs is no higher for RAs and counselors than it is for other positions.

Many centers acknowledge a turnover problem with RAs because of the low pay, shift work, and "burnout" associated with the job. Opportunities for advancement within the centers and the larger Job Corps system also play a role. Because this is an entry-level position, good RAs often move into other positions when openings occur. In contrast, only 16 to 19 percent of management staff have less than one year of experience in their position. In all positions, turnover at CCCs is markedly lower than at contract centers.

Staff Vacancies and Time to Fill Position Openings. The mail survey collected information about current staff vacancies. At the time of the mail survey, nearly all centers had some staff vacancies, most for a wide range of positions (Table VII.3). Ninety percent of the centers had at least one RA vacancy, nearly 80 percent had vacancies for vocational and academic instructors, and about three-quarters had vacancies for counselors or senior management. Consistent with the data on staff experience, fewer CCCs had staff vacancies in each position. However, many CCCs have vacancies in RAs, vocational instructors, and senior management at levels similar to those of significantly nonresidential centers. Primarily residential centers were most likely to have staff vacancies in all positions.

Table VII.4 provides data on the average number of months centers take to fill vacancies for the different staff positions. On average across centers and positions, 72 percent of staff vacancies are filled in less than two months, and less than 3 percent of the vacancies take longer than six months to fill. The data indicate that vocational instructor, senior management, and RA take somewhat longer to fill, with 35 to 40 percent of such openings taking two months or more, compared to 20 to 30 percent for other positions. The most common reasons that center staff cited for extended vacancies are low salaries and, for centers located in rural areas, a shortage of skilled workers.

TABLE VII.3

PERCENTAGE OF CENTERS WITH STAFF VACANCIES,
BY POSITION AND CENTER TYPE

			Contract	
	Total	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Any Staff Position	99	97	100	100
Senior Management	73	67	76	73
Other Management	64	10	85	81
Vocational Instructors	79	70	87	73
Academic Instructors	77	60	83	85
Counselors	74	40	87	85
Residential Advisors	90	83	100	77
Other Staff	99	97	100	100

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

TABLE VII.4

DISTRIBUTION OF AVERAGE TIMES TO FILL STAFF POSITIONS
(Average Percentage)

	Months to Fill Position				
Staff Categories	Less than 2	2 to 3	4 to 6	7 to 12	More than 12
All	72	18	7	2	0
Senior Management	63	21	12	4	1
Other Management	79	13	6	2	0
Vocational Instructors	61	26	9	3	0
Education and Orientation Instructors	71	21	6	2	0
Counselors	70	19	9	1	1
Residential Advisors	65	23	10	2	0
Other Staff	76	15	5	3	1

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

NOTE: Estimated for centers with vacancies.

CCCs take more time to fill staff vacancies, at least in part because they must adhere to civil service hiring procedures. Although not reported in Table VII.4, contract centers, on average, fill nearly 80 percent of all open positions in under two months, whereas CCCs fill only 38 percent of all their open positions that quickly. Contract centers appear to have a particular advantage with the harder-to-fill senior management positions, which they almost universally reported being able to fill within six months. CCCs, by contrast, reported that 15 percent of these critical management positions remained unfilled after six months. Of course, the remote location of many CCCs may also play a role in the longer time required to fill vacancies.

Centers typically employ substitute teachers, RAs, and other nonmanagerial staff to fill in temporarily for absent employees. However, some centers use substitute staff more extensively, relying on them to cover for extended staff leave or vacancies. Several centers indicated that they frequently fill permanent jobs with long-term substitutes already working in the position.

3. Staff Recruitment and Wage Structures

Most contract centers use internal hiring and promotion as an important staff recruitment strategy, especially for management positions. Those affiliated with the larger training corporations generally advertise management job openings first within the corporate system before moving on to other recruitment sources. In contrast with management jobs, however, entry positions are most frequently filled through walk-in applicants, local advertising, and recruitment at local colleges.

CCCs appear to have much less flexibility and control over the hiring process than their private counterparts.[2] Civil service requirements guide the recruitment and hiring process, which is carried out by the agency in charge of the CCC rather than by the individual center, and these requirements

[2]However, many centers operated by private contractors are subject to the oversight of their corporate headquarters. Corporate offices are sometimes heavily involved in the personnel decisions of their centers, reducing the center director's control over the hiring process.

may prevent CCCs from responding quickly to hiring needs. Contract centers and CCCs also use different methods to determine staff wages and salaries. About two-thirds of all contract centers use a prevailing-wage scale, and the remaining one-third pay staff according to a company wage scale, determined by a central office. All CCCs pay staff according to a federal government wage scale.

Vocational instructors must be certified, licensed, or accredited. Where national trade or unions provide the training, staff must be certified by the union or trade organization. In these situations, centers retain managerial authority over the trade or union staff, but recruiting and hiring is not handled by the center. This makes it difficult for centers to manage vocational instructors that are not performing effectively.

Center managers reported that vocational training staff are generally not difficult to recruit, although, as noted earlier, the time required to fill these positions is greater than average. Key reasons for the relative ease of filling these positions (and for low turnover) include:

- Favorable work conditions (steadiness, regular hours, benefits, indoor environment)
- Fewer discipline problems and less parental interference than in the public schools
- Ability of staff to live at home rather than at the job

Some drawbacks were cited, however:

- Year-round teaching schedule, with no spring break or summer vacation
- Undesirable locations (difficulty in recruiting minority staff to isolated centers in rural areas, difficulty in recruiting staff to work in warehouse district for inner-city center)
- Perceived problems with student discipline and lack of motivation
- Certificate requirements and having to deal with bureaucracy

Most centers reported that salaries for vocational staff are lower than those in other public education. Instructors provided by national contractors are the major exception to this: they are paid union wages, which are typically more than salaries in public education. Despite low salaries, staff at most centers said that turnover and attrition in the vocational education component is lower than at most other public educational institutions.

Most centers hire certified teachers to be academic instructors. Center managers said that turnover among academic staff is lower at Job Corps centers than at nearby educational institutions. The following factors facilitate recruiting and retaining Job Corps academic staff:

- Newspaper ads generate enough applicants in most locations, which suggests an ample supply of teachers.
- Teachers have fewer problems with students because of the stricter discipline of Job Corps compared to public schools.
- Many teachers like to work with Job Corps youth, who they believe are serious and trying hard to overcome past problems.

Various factors also were cited as impediments:

- Low salaries (especially in light of the 12-month schedule of Job Corps compared to the 9-month public school schedule)
- The isolated location of many Job Corps centers, which also makes it difficult to recruit minority staff
- Perceptions of having to work with "problem" students at Job Corps

Many centers hire new teachers from the ranks of their substitute teachers, who understand the pay scale, know how to work with Job Corps students, and have demonstrated their abilities. Retired teachers were also mentioned often as a source of candidates for academic instructor positions,

although several center staff said they wanted to increase the number of younger teachers, who may be better able to relate to students.

Staff incentives of various kinds appear to be an integral part of center personnel policies. Many centers provide small cash awards or extra vacation time to employees who make special contributions to the center or propose useful innovations. The notion of merit-based bonuses for staff, while not as widespread as incentive pay, is gaining popularity. About one-third of the centers visited either have recently instituted or are planning to institute merit-based bonuses as part of the overall staff payment structure. Several centers already link the performance evaluation and pay of vocational instructors to their students' placement outcomes.

4. Staff and Student Composition, by Gender and Race

In Job Corps, as in other education programs, it is desirable that students have adults of their own gender and ethnic group available who can serve as mentors and role models. To achieve this, Job Corps staff should reflect the gender and ethnic composition of Job Corps students. In this section, we provide information on the gender and the racial and ethnic backgrounds of Job Corps center staff and students to determine the extent to which staff and students match on these key dimensions.

As Table VII.5 shows, 52 percent of all Job Corps staff are males and 52 percent are white, non-Hispanic. Thirty-three percent are black, non-Hispanic; 10 percent are Hispanic; and 3 percent are American Indian or Alaskan Native. Not surprisingly, the gender and racial compositions of staff at CCCs and contract centers are quite different. CCC staff is predominantly male (62 percent), whereas only 50 percent of staff at primarily residential centers and 45 percent at significantly nonresidential centers are male. The racial/ethnic composition of CCC staff is also less diverse.

TABLE VII.5

GENDER AND RACIAL DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF AND STUDENTS, BY CENTER TYPE
(Percentage)

			Contract	
	Total	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Staff				
Male	52	62	50	45
Female	48	38	50	55
White (Non-Hispanic)	52	77	49	28
Black (Non-Hispanic)	33	15	37	43
Hispanic	10	3	7	24
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3	4	4	1
Asian or Pacific Islander	2	0	2	4
Students				
Male	59	72	58	46
Female	41	28	42	54
White (Non-Hispanic)	39	61	32	27
Black (Non-Hispanic)	43	24	50	49
Hispanic	12	9	11	18
American Indian/Alaska Native	5	5	5	3
Asian or Pacific Islander	2	1	2	3

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

White staff make up over three-fourths of all CCC center staff (77 percent), compared to 49 percent in primarily residential centers and 28 percent in significantly nonresidential centers.

The average gender and ethnic composition of students is reasonably similar to that of staff, especially gender composition: 59 percent of students are male (compared to 52 percent of staff) and 39 percent are white non-Hispanic (compared with 52 percent of staff). The gender/ethnic differences among staff across the types of centers are also present among students: a higher proportion of students at CCCs is male (72 percent) and a higher proportion is white non-Hispanic (61 percent) than is true at the contract centers.

To quantify the comparison of the gender and racial similarity between center staff and students, we computed an *index of dissimilarity*. If the compositions of the two populations were identical, the index would have a value of zero. Conversely, if the compositions of the two populations were completely dissimilar, the index would have a value of 100.[3]

The index confirms that Job Corps center staff are quite closely matched with their students by gender but less closely matched by race/ethnicity (Table VII.6). Both female students and female staff make up less than half their respective populations, and the overall index of dissimilarity is only 12. CCCs have a slightly higher index of dissimilarity (16).[4] The index for racial dissimilarity is

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[3]The index of dissimilarity is $.5 \frac{1}{n} \sum_{k=1}^{n} \left| Pstudents_{jk} - Pstaff_{jk} \right|$,

where:

$k = 1...n$ centers

$Pstudents_{jk}$ = proportion of students at center k with attribute j (for example, female)

$Pstaff_{jk}$ = proportion of staff at center with attribute j (for example, female)

$k = 1 \ldots n$ centers

$j = 1 \ldots j$ attributes

[4]There is also some regional variation among contract centers in this index for gender, ranging from a low of 5 to 6 percent in Regions 1, 2, and 9 to a high of 17 percent in Region 4. (See Appendix Table B.26.)

TABLE VII.6

COMPARISON OF STAFF AND STUDENT COMPOSITION
(Mean Dissimilarity Index)

			Contract	
	Total	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Gender	12	16	11	10
Race	27	27	26	28
Gender and Race	32	34	32	32

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

much higher than for gender dissimilarity. Overall, it is about 27 consistently across center types.[5] If both gender and race are compared simultaneously, the index of dissimilarity is uniformly higher. Overall, the mean index value is 32. The patterns by center type and region follow those for race.

Table VII.7 shows the gender and ethnic composition of center staff by position. Most management staff and vocational instructors (about 60 percent or more) are males, and slightly over one-half (54 percent) of RAs are male. In contrast, most academic instructors and counselors are women. Differences in racial composition by position are also considerable. About two-thirds of the instructors (vocational and academic), about half the management staff and counselors, and just one-third of the RAs are white.

B. SAFETY AND SECURITY

Centers are responsible for maintaining safety and security and for ensuring that local laws are obeyed. Levels of security vary, depending on the type of center and the nature of the surrounding community. Private contractors must employ an adequate number of trained security and law enforcement personnel; CCCs may rely on agency personnel to manage center security.

1. Facilities and Security Staffing

Two basic elements define a center's approach to security: (1) whether the facility is secured or unsecured, and (2) the primary role of security staff. Over one-half (58 percent) of all centers are secured facilities, meaning that persons may enter and leave the center only through secured doors or gates (Table VII.8). High walls or fences physically separate the center from the surrounding community. Most CCCs are unsecured facilities, since they are located in rural areas. In contrast,

[5]Racial dissimilarity is also more prevalent in some regions than in others (Appendix Table B.26). At the two extremes, the index is only 12 for contract centers in Region 4 but as large as 42 for CCCs in Region 2.

TABLE VII.7

GENDER AND RACIAL DISTRIBUTION OF CENTER STAFF, BY POSITION TYPE

	Male	White
All Staff	59	39
Senior Management	63	54
Other Management	59	50
Vocational Instructors	64	69
Academic Instructors	42	63
Counselors	46	50
Residential Advisors	54	36
Other Staff	47	52

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

TABLE VII.8

CENTER APPROACHES TO PROVIDE SECURITY
(Percentage of Centers)

	Center Type			
	Total	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
Whether Secured Facility	58	17	72	77
Role of Security Staff Is Primarily				
To physically secure center	31	7	41	39
To enforce student discipline	42	0	57	58
No security staff	27	93	2	4

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

about three-fourths of contract centers are secured facilities, since they are located mainly in urban areas.

The use of private security guards is common, but not universal. The large majority of CCCs (93 percent) operate without designated security staff, relying instead on the law enforcement staffs of government agencies, such as National Park Service or Forest Service rangers who patrol the federal land on which the CCC is located. In contrast, nearly all private centers have security guards. Security staff perform a variety of functions, including interceding in student disputes and fights, responding to emergencies, writing up incident reports on students, investigating serious violations of center rules, screening (sometimes searching) new students and students returning to center for contraband, keeping out trespassers, protecting students from threats or dangers from outside the center, and patrolling the adjacent neighborhoods.

Among those centers with security staff, less than one-half are more traditional in their view of security, focusing on the physical security of the center and on law enforcement. However, at over one-half the centers with security staff, center directors said these staff had an integral role in the overall discipline system. These centers expect security staff to work with students to change negative behavior and to intervene to prevent minor problems from escalating.

Observations during our center visits confirmed that centers emphasize differing roles for security staff. At some centers, security staff were highly visible, actively patrolling the center, supervising recreational and meal times, and performing dorm inspections. At others, the security staff's functions were limited to securing the perimeter of the center and responding to serious incidents. As one security manager described his staff's activities, "We intercede only when we are asked [by the center staff]."

Interviews with security directors also confirmed that many perceive their role as different from traditional surveillance and policing. For example, at some less traditional sites, security personnel do not wear uniforms. Moreover, security managers indicate that their staff will first talk to a student about a rule infraction and try to change the behavior, instead of automatically writing up and reporting the infraction. Several mentioned that they see security staff functioning as counselors and role models, not solely as disciplinarians.

2. General Perceptions of Center Safety/Security

There are two primary sources of information on the general level of safety and security at Job Corps centers. The first includes information obtained during the site visits, either from staff interviews or focus group meetings with students and staff. The second is the student satisfaction survey that centers administer to all active students each quarter. Next, we provide information on the perceived level of general safety/security at the time of the study based on these two data sources.

Most staff and students believe centers are safe. Very few staff during the interviews and focus group meetings said they were concerned for their personal safety on center. Residential staff reported that some students from racially homogeneous communities initially feel unsafe on center because they are in an unfamiliar environment and have to interact with students from different backgrounds. Indeed, this adjustment to a diverse community is a major obstacle for many new students.

Residential and security staff in urban centers said the surrounding neighborhoods are unsafe or are a dangerous influence on students, particularly in terms of drugs and gangs. Residential staff at about a third of the centers visited recommended some additional enhancements to security, such as improved control of the perimeter, external locks on dormitories, and a greater security presence

on center. Security managers, however, reported being largely satisfied with the security systems in place.

Students also generally perceive that centers are safe places. During the focus group meetings, very few students raised concerns about personal safety on center. Moreover, based on data from the June 1996 student satisfaction survey (Table VII.9), most students (84 percent) surveyed agreed with the statement "I feel safe and secure on center" by responding "very true" or "somewhat true." A slightly higher percentage (87 percent) agreed with the statement "Staff care about my safety." Moreover, few students (5 percent) reported that they were personally involved in a fight on center in the last month, although 13 percent reported that someone had threatened to beat them up during the last month. Students in significantly nonresidential centers and at CCCs were slightly more likely to feel safe than students at primarily residential centers. Although not shown on the table, student reports of overall safety vary by region, with 91 percent of students in Region 10 reporting that they feel safe and secure, compared to only 73 percent in Region 5.

3. Negative Incident Reports and Changes Since Zero Tolerance (ZT)

In this section, we provide information on the reported occurrence of negative incidents, including theft, robbery, property destruction, gang activity, fighting, arrests, weapon possession, assault, sexual assault, threat of assault, and drug and alcohol possession and use. In addition to information from the site visits and the student satisfaction survey, centers also provided information on the number of negative incident reports filed during October 1994 and October 1995. This covers a one-year period around the introduction in March 1995 of the ZT policy for drugs and violence and the one-strike-and-you're-out policy. Thus, by comparing data for a period before and after the change in the policy, we can compare the level of safety before and after and obtain a rough indication of the effect of the policy change. As summarized below, consistent with the general

TABLE VII.9

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY, BY CENTER TYPE
(Percentage of Students That Agree with Statement)

	Center Type			
	Total	CCC	Primarily Residential	Significantly Nonresidential
I feel safe and secure on center	84	88	82	90
Staff care about my safety	87	88	86	90
I have been involved in a physical fight on center in the last month	5	7	5	3
Someone on center threatened to beat me up in the last month	13	15	14	8

SOURCE: Quarterly Job Corps Student Satisfaction Survey, June 1996.

perceptions provided to us by students and staff, it appears that the ZT policy has been quite effective in improving center safety and security.

Table VII.10 shows the mean number of negative incident reports filed by offense category in October 1994 and October 1995. As shown in the first row of the table, the mean number of theft incident reports declined from 1.53 in October 1994 to 0.96 in October 1995. Yet many students and residential staff indicated to us during the site visits that they perceive theft on center to be a widespread problem. RAs at almost two-thirds of the study sites visited indicated that petty theft in dorms is an ongoing problem and a source of conflict among students. Although students have access to locked storage space, they do not always take the precaution of securing their possessions.

Reported incidents of robbery and property destruction also appear to have declined since the introduction of the ZT policy. Specifically, the mean number of negative incident reports for property destruction declined by nearly one-half, while the mean number of robbery incidents declined to one-fifth its level a year earlier.

The introduction of ZT is also probably at least partly responsible for the reduction in gang activity. The average number of negative incident reports related to gang activity declined from 0.82 in October 1994 to .38 in October 1995. However, during our site visits, security managers at over one-third of the sites visited voiced concern about ongoing gang activity. Several also mentioned that gangs had been a problem in the past or are considered a potential problem requiring constant staff vigilance. Even at rural centers, security staff had encountered recent gang activity on center and stressed the need to stay abreast of gang developments in the communities from which students are recruited.

TABLE VII.10

NUMBER OF NEGATIVE INCIDENT REPORTS, BY CATEGORY
(Mean Monthly Number of Reports by Center Type)

	Center Type							
	Overall		CCC		Primarily Residential		Significantly Nonresidential	
	October		October		October		October	
Incident Category	1994	1995	1994	1995	1994	1995	1994	1995
Theft	1.53	0.96	1.69	0.56	2.04	1.48	0.40	0.38
Robbery	0.19	0.04	0.67	0.07	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.00
Property Destruction	0.99	0.58	1.07	0.57	1.33	0.70	0.28	0.35
Gang Activity	0.82	0.38	0.74	0.36	1.17	0.42	0.24	0.31
Fighting	3.24	1.82	2.40	1.21	4.43	2.66	1.88	0.85
Arrest	0.50	0.68	0.48	0.46	0.67	0.88	0.20	0.54
Weapon Possession	0.45	0.37	0.52	0.21	0.55	0.56	0.20	0.15
Assault	1.92	1.91	1.81	1.46	2.48	2.57	1.00	1.12
Sexual Assault	0.15	0.14	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.10	0.40	0.38
Threat of Assault	1.20	1.16	1.04	0.64	1.85	1.72	0.20	0.65
Drug Use	1.90	2.65	2.15	1.36	1.80	2.68	1.80	4.00
Drug Possession	1.10	0.66	0.86	0.25	1.40	1.00	0.84	0.46

SOURCE: National Job Corps Study Center Mail Survey.

During the site visits, staff also discussed some of the measures that have been taken to address an actual or potential problem of gang activity. These measures include:

- Forbidding any display of gang affiliation (dress, handshakes, etc.) and enforcing sanctions against such display
- Requiring students to sign a contract not to participate in a gang while on center
- Developing close relationships with local law enforcement in order to be better informed about gang activity that might spill on to the center

Another key issue is violence on center. The mean number of incident reports for fighting declined significantly from 3.24 to 1.82 from October 1994 to October 1995. Over the same period, the number of incident reports for arrests actually increased slightly. This increase in arrests likely represents a more strict interpretation of the ZT policies.

Our discussions with center staff did not reveal any major issues with violence. Specifically, none of the study sites perceived violence on center to be an issue since the enactment of ZT policies. However, sites clearly have different thresholds for defining violence. For example, staff at one rural center could not recall the last time they had experienced a violent assault. Another center had experienced five serious incidents in the previous three months, but still did not consider these incidents to constitute a problem.

Centers reported an average of about two assaults per month, which remained fairly constant after the introduction of the ZT policy. However, about one incident report was filed monthly for the threat of assault. Information from the student survey generally confirms that assaults and threats of assault are rare. There were virtually no reported incidents of sexual assault during the sample months before or after enactment of ZT.

Sexual misconduct (not shown) is not a compelling concern for centers: only about one-fourth of security managers cited prohibited sexual activity as a problem for the center. A similar percentage of RAs expressed concerns on the topic. Most centers deal with student sexual behavior as an education and social development issue to be addressed through counseling and social skills training (SST), and only a few centers mentioned any security measures taken to address the problem.

Changes in negative incident reports related to possession and use of alcohol and drugs were mixed. The number of such reports for drug and alcohol possession declined from 1.1 in October 1994 to 0.66 in October 1995, but the number for drug and alcohol use increased somewhat (from 1.90 to 2.65). The higher number of negative incident reports for drug and alcohol use may reflect the increased reporting of such infractions, a result of increased drug testing in this period.

While ZT is widely acknowledged to have been effective in curtailing drug and alcohol use on center, over one-half the centers visited indicated that they still experience problems with student consumption of alcohol and drugs. Of this group, however, several qualified their assessment of the problem, indicating that although the problem exists, it is not "serious." Others characterized the problem as stemming primarily from off-center use, particularly of alcohol. This is consistent with the greater problem at significantly nonresidential centers. More remote centers typically reported an easier time controlling alcohol consumption because of lack of student access to liquor stores. Three sites indicated that they allowed students over 21 to consume alcohol off campus. Some of the measures centers have taken to address problems with drug and alcohol use include searches for contraband when students return to center; breath tests administered to students who appeared to have been drinking; individual counseling on substance abuse; and contact with local liquor store owners to discourage sales to students.

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